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ADDRESS
OF
HON. JOSEPH SEGAR,

ON THE

WAR, THE UNION, AND THE RESTORATION OF PEACE,

*Delivered on the occasion of a Complimentary Serenade to him, at the
Monumental Hotel, Richmond, on the night of June 22, 1865.*

[From the Richmond Republic]

A large crowd in the street having called Mr. SEGAR out, he spoke as follows :

FELLOW-CITIZENS—for, thank God, we are all fellow-citizens once more—God be praised ten thousand times—from pine-forest Maine to golden California, we are once again one people. Fellow-citizens, I say, what do you want with me, a poor vituperated Union man, here to night? This cruel war, blessed be God, is at last at an end. The stream of brothers' blood which has been reddening our waters for more than four years has ceased to flow. The genius of peace hovers once more over our land. Why should you now invade the slumbers in which I hoped to dream, under the auspices of a new peace, of the future glory of our country, and the restored happiness of our people? Do you want a speech from me? If so, you reckon without your host? I am not "on my foot" for a speech. Like the rebellion, I am used up; I am fatigued, wearied down, in helping my friends of that small, but compact and patriotic body, the General Assembly of Virginia, in the good work of reconstruction; and I am in such joy at the idea that that small, but gallant embodiment of loyalty has laid deep and broad the foundations of reconstruction and reunion, that I am almost beside myself. Besides, what am I to talk to you about? [A voice—We came here to compliment you for your uncompro-

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eye

missing devotion to the Union.] Oh! well, if that's all, I can make this speech as "short as pie-crust," as the saying is. I deserve no credit for standing by the Stars and Stripes in the great conflict. The road that pointed to Union was to my poor eyes as plain as the road to the parish church, and the more I looked at it, the more lustrous, and yet more lustrous, it seemed. It was so lighted up, so radiant, that I could not, for the life of me, help following it. There was another road pointed out to me by my fellow-citizens of Virginia, which was boggy and craggy, beset with cavernous precipices, that bedizzened the head as you approached their brink—a road bestrewed with ruin and sprinkled with blood at every step, along which the genius of murder, and of want, and of starvation, and of ruin, met you at every move. It was the Secession, Disunion road. I could not travel it, fellow-citizens. It was too hard a road for me, "Jordan (they say) is a hard road to travel," but this Secession road was a far harder road to travel than the road to Jordan. And so, having two roads before me, I chose the Union road. My friends in old Virginia told me it was the wrong road, and that when I got to the end of it I would find myself "in a bad box," perhaps with a halter around my neck. But I said no; you are travelling the wrong road. It will lead you to death and ruin. It will lead you to seas of blood; it will conduct you to the graves of your fathers, your sons, and your brothers. It will lead the heart-stricken mother in agony to the half-covered grave of her, perhaps, only son. And I tell you, if you follow it through, your property will be all gone, and you will not have a "nigger" left, and you will, beside, get, in the end, perhaps, one of the biggest thrashings that ever a people had, and will be so dispirited and broken down when you get to the end of it, that you won't have spirit to call your lives your own. And so it was I took the Union road. And I had no misgiving, because, when I came to the fork of the road, I beheld a huge sign-board, marked with big letters of living light, directing me which way to go, on which were written these words; "You, Joseph Segar, one of my sons and citizens, must obey the Constitution and Laws of the United States, anything in my constitution and my laws to the contrary notwithstanding." So that while I have been villified beyond degree by my fellow-citizens of my own dear, native land for not going with them into Secession, I have the clear authority, the peremptory order, of my mother, Virginia, for what I did. She gave me the word of command, and if I did not wheel right, it was her fault—not mine. And in what I did I have nothing to regret or take back. God forbid! On the contrary, let me now here declare, to my calumniators and all the world, that I would not take in exchange for the honor and glory of my position in this great struggle for the Union, all the gold that ever glittered in the mines of California, or that shall be gathered from them to the end of time.

And now, fellow-citizens, as you command me to speak, allow me to put in a word "on my own hook." As I have had the misfortune to have been much condemned for separating from my State in this matter of Secession, I propose to propound to those who have passed hard sentence upon me a few interrogatories, not in a spirit of malignity, for I have no unkind feeling for a single one of my fellow-citizens of my State. If they will only admit that I saw a little farther into the millstone than they did, I am satisfied, and forgive them. But the answers to the questions I propose will not only vindicate all of us who stood by the Stars and Stripes, but may teach us a moral that will redound to our lasting good.

First. Why did we go into Secession? I have never heard a sensible reason for it. I do not know yet why the South went into Secession. When in the Legislature in 1861, I challenged all the leading Secessionists in that body to send up to the library and bring down the statute books and show the United States law that invaded a Southern right. No one accepted the challenge, and so *it was conceded* that there was no cause for the rebellion. This vindicates me and all others who, like me, chose to stand by the old flag. Let us not commit this great folly again!

Next, what have we Southern people gained by secession? It may be a little cruel to ask the question, but I do ask it, and I have the right to ask it and I have the right to demand that the Secessionists answer it. What then, have we gained by secession? We were told that we could make slavery safer. It was not safe enough under the Constitution. No. We must make it safer. Safe, safer, safest: that's what we want, and must have. And how is it now? Why, we have not a "nigger" left, and you and I, and all other once owners of slaves, have to black our own shoes—"shine them up," as the shoe-blacks say—and, Cuffee being gone, to feed, curry, saddle and harness our own "critters!" Glorious privileges these we have won by Secession! The privileges of polishing our own calf-skins and harnessing and hitching up our own teams! Glorious secession! All hail to secession! In my country, fellow-citizens, when a man makes an extra effort to do a thing, and does nothing, we say "he made a water haul." And so with our Southern brethren when they went into secession to make slavery safer, they made a water haul. The moral is—I trust never to be forgotten—that when our property and other rights are safe, don't, by violence, attempt to make them safer. "Better let well enough alone!"

But we want commercial independence. We are tributary to the North. We must throw off the shackles of commercial thralldom. Well, fellow-citizens of the South, have you got commercial independence by secession! At the time of General Lee's surrender what port held you open to commerce? But now that the war is at an end, let us go ahead and seek commerce and commercial independence by employing the proper instrumen-

talities of commerce—those instrumentalities that have placed our Northern brethren, in this regard, so far ahead of us.

But you wanted *political* independence. Have you got it? But, in tenderness to my fellow-citizens, who have so much differed from me, I forbear to press the question.

That is what you Southern people have gained by Secession. Let us see what we—I mean the Union men of the United States—have gained by secession and the civil war it provoked. Have we gained nothing? I say that, settle the account when we will—strike the balance when we may—there will be found a heavy balance in our favor. This war has cost us oceans of blood and billions of treasure. We have reddened every Southern stream with brother's blood. We have sent agony to millions of hearts. We have made Woe the goddess at millions of hearth-stones. We have furrowed every field with the graves of dear ones who kissed the earth on the fatal battle-field. We have made a nation of widows, orphans and cripples. We have incurred a debt which a man can scarcely count in his day and generation, and yet I hold it to be demonstrable that we are largely gainers by the rebellion.

We have an offset which far overbalances the money and blood, the desolation and ruin, this awful rebellion has cost us.

In the first place, we have knocked the resolutions of '98 "into a cocked hat," as the saying runs. Not "into the middle of next week," but of the next century. The pernicious doctrines of these resolutions are the very germ of that treason which has ripened into matured rebellion and insurrection. They have, ever and anon, taught our young men lessons of treason. They have been all the time the ladder by which the ambitious young men of the South have sought to reach political distinction. But, thank this rebellion! these resolutions are now "cold as a wedge"—"dead as a mackerel." There is no danger that they will resurrect! "Alas! poor Yorrick!"

We have gained in this, that the people of the United States have shown their unalterable purpose, at all hazards, and at whatever cost, to maintain the Union of these States. They have incurred, without a murmur, a debt of billions. They have sent to the battle-fields of Washington's Union a million and more of men. They have looked war, yea, civil war, with its thousand horrors, full in the face. The English of all this is, that, come what will, the Union must and shall be preserved, and our Southern brethren will never forget the lesson while they live. They see that the people of the United States mean to be one people to the end of time; and they not only see that they cherish the purpose to maintain an unbroken nationality to the last, but that *they have the power* to make that purpose effectual.

We have gained in this, that we have taught our Southern brethren to know and see that there is such a thing as treason against the United States.

Heretofore—that is from 1798 to this hour—the Southern people have been taught that the intervention of a State by secession or nullification would relieve a citizen from the commission of treason, and hold him harmless. The resolutions of '98 were referred to as allowing any one State to break up the Union at her will, and of course to shield her citizens from the consequences of treason. That fatal hallucination is gone! No more will the men of the South be deluded by it, and inveigled by it, into rebellion and treason! For the resolutions of '98 they will gladly substitute the political maxims of Washington, and Madison, and Marshall, and cling evermore to the Union.

But the grand gain—a corollary from the foregoing reasoning and facts—will be *the perpetual peace that we have won by this rebellion, wicked as it is*. We shall have peace at home, and peace abroad, in long, long time to come. Our Southern brethren, and all sympathisers with them, will see in the result of the late struggle the utter hopelessness of any future attempt at disunion, and the nations of the Old World will perceive in the demonstrations of mighty power made by the results of the rebellion that we are a match for the entire world, and, seeing this, they will be all the while on their good behavior. Southern rebellion has already bowed its head low to the earth, and France and England, with cap in hand, are at this moment bowing and scraping to us. I repeat, this rebellion, with all its cost of blood and money, has given us perpetual, eternal peace. And so I dare assert that we are better off with the rebellion and its results than we would have been had it never happened. Therefore we may, all of us, North and South, not only accept the result of the great conflict, but rise from its ruins with the stirring hope that all is not lost, and that rich stores of national blessing yet await us.

And we are, inexpressibly, gainers by the abolishment of slavery. This may seem strange doctrine to come from a native Virginian and life-long slaveholder. But so it is. Without going into a discussion of the legality of the mode by which slavery has been abolished, I am bound, as an honest man, to say that, with all the lights before me and around me, the policy of emancipation, as an economical question, is the policy for the white men of the South. I speak from experience and observation. In my own county, where emancipation has been in practical operation from the commencement of the war, and on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, where the policy has been fairly tested, it is an ascertained fact that the farmers make more clear money with hired colored labor than they did when they cultivated the farms with their own slaves. The profit is generally doubled; in some cases trebled.

What is to be the result of the radical change in the labor system of the South, no one can foresee. I am frank to confess I at first thought it would

be attended with shock and revulsion, and unsettling disturbance. But I distrust the correctness of my original opinion. I incline now to the idea founded on practical observation, that the whole relation between master and servant may be so disposed of as to avoid crush and crash, and improve the condition of both races. Make the negro work—which the Government seems disposed to do, and which necessity will make him do—require both white and black mutually to observe their contracts one with the other—let the white men give the colored men fair wages, and otherwise treat them kindly—which it is their interest to do—and the transition from slave to free labor will no “tale of ruin tell,” and the country will be freed almost unconsciously of one of the greatest evils, that ever afflicted and cursed it.

And now, fellow-citizens, to come nearer home, I congratulate you upon the prospect of an early return to civil government, law, and order, and to the glorious Union of our fathers. A few short months, and this restoration will be yours. It will be made under the auspices of the Restored Government of the State, headed by Governor Peirpoint. Some, I am aware, object to this medium of restoration; but what care you about the mode if you can attain the great good? The legislative body of this Restored Government, it is true, is small, but it is as large, I believe, as that of our little sister, Delaware; and you should recollect that this Restored Government was a loyal formation—the best we loyal men of Eastern Virginia could, under the circumstances, do. We could not go with you against the Stars and Stripes, and so, rather than have a military government, we set up a loyal civil government of our own. It was, seemingly, a small affair, but it was founded on the principle that the *loyal* people of a State are *the* people of the State. This principle the Confederate Government and the whole South have acknowledged. Mr. Russell, a resident of West Virginia, was admitted a member of the Confederate Congress, and members were admitted to that Congress from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri, elected by the votes of a few soldiers in the field or a score of rebel voters at home, on the principle, and that only, that the loyalty of a State is the State itself. We are small, it is true, but we are a nucleus for reconstruction and reunion, and you should bear in mind the couplet we used to read in the English reader when we were boys:

“Large streams from little fountains flow,
Tall oaks from little acorns grow.”

You have in Governor Peirpoint a man of ability, and character, and heart; and if he can have your confidence, as I am sure he will, and if you will continue to exhibit, as I am yet surer you will, a sincere submission to

the results as they have transpired, you will soon forget the trials of the late unhappy strife, and be happy again.

The Legislature now assembled, small as it is, has shown much wisdom, generosity and statesmanship towards their fellow-citizens of their State. They have admitted to the right of suffrage nearly the whole people of the State heretofore disfranchised. They have, in fine, put the people of Virginia on the same platform on which President Johnson has placed the people of North Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Texas, and together, I trust, you will all return to the Union of our fathers, chastened somewhat, but the wiser for the chastening you have passed.

Fellow-citizens, for one, I am in high hope. The skies seem to me "bright and brightening." With the teaching experience we have had, and above all, with that great incubus and cause of disquiet removed—slavery—I am convinced that our great country will go on prospering and to prosper, growing and to grow, strengthening and to strengthen, becoming each year greater and greater, until, bounding up and bounding on, it shall attain an eminence "not dreamed of in any man's philosophy."

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